

# **CABLE AND COMMUNICATIONS ADVISORY COMMITTEE**

## **Meeting Minutes**

**Date:** October 22<sup>nd</sup> 2008      **Location:** Council Office Building, 2<sup>nd</sup> Floor Conference Room 225

**Committee Attendance:** Mark Berman, Jay Boyar, Yen-Ju Chen, Trish Evans, Bing Kung, Suzanne Weiss, Noreene Wells and Ben Wu. **Absent:** Kelly Cameron, Kernan Chaisson, Nathan Finkelstein, David Friedman, Grant Moy, Joy Ragsdale and Gabriel Nmah. **Cable Office Staff:** Amy Wilson and Andrea Gardner. **PEG/MCT Representative/s:** Melissa Pace and Richard Turner **Guest/s:** Alex Cohen.

### **1. Call to order/Approval of Agenda, Introduction of Attendees and Minutes of September Meeting**

Meeting began at 7pm with introductions. A motion to approve the September meeting minutes was made by xxx and passed unanimously

### **2. Staff Reports, Budget and Questions**

#### ***Montgomery Community Television - Richard Turner, Executive Director***

Richard provided the committee with an update of the activities of the PEG Network, which include the Digital Study, the PEG Strategic Plan and two RFP's which have already been released, submitted and evaluation panels scheduled. The PEG Network is responding to the current economic challenges and identifying methods to increase collaboration and decreasing total support costs for equipment using standardization. Richard also pointed out that there are currently 10,000 analog tvs in our schools, which will not operate after Comcast completes their three-year conversion to all digital, and that in Michigan there is an area where all the PEG channels have changed to digital.

The Access Montgomery Monty Awards will take place on December 6<sup>th</sup> 2008 and invitations will be sent out shortly. All CCAC members are invited. Access Montgomery volunteers are in the process of creating two shows regarding the digital TV transition one directed to the African Immigrant population and the second is directed toward the broader community. Richard also agreed to see how the PEGs could help show the video Noreene came across on DTV modeled after "This Old House."

#### ***PEG Network - Melissa Pace, Manager Instructional Television, Montgomery College***

Melissa asked the committee to take some time to look at Channel 10 as she welcomes any suggestions for improvement. Melissa and Richard discussed the upcoming budget and how important it is for the PEG channels, and how they must be able to proceed with their digital conversion, and maintenance costs. PEGs are trying to buy similar equipment and share training and backup.

#### ***Cable Office - Amy Wilson, Acting Manager, Administration and Franchising Services***

Amy reviewed the September Cable office as attached.

#### **Questions directed to Amy regarding the Cable Office Report:**

Suzanne inquired if the same 311 system being put together by Montgomery County is the same as the one being used in the District of Columbia? **RESPONSE:** Amy responded she was uncertain about the District's system but she thought the system being implemented by the Montgomery County was very similar to the one in Fairfax.

Trish asked if this 311 system will be used to answer any question posed from a county resident.

**RESPONSE:** Amy responded this is a centralized service system.

Suzanne asked about the cost of rate regulation review, and if there was any way to eliminate yearly requests. **RESPONSE:** Amy responded that rate regulation review is a very costly expense, and the franchise agreements permit annual rate increase requests.

Ben asked about the impact of budget projections with regards to the cable administrator position for 2009 budget. **RESPONSE:** Amy responded cable administrator's position was budgeted for.

### 3. Unfinished Business and Committee Reports

Suzanne provided the committee an update from the recent MFP Committee and reminded the committee and cable office Chair Trachtenberg's request for the committee to work on the provider report cards being formula. Suzanne emphasized how supportive Costis Torgas, Council IT Adviser, was of the CCAC and their work, and requested he be invited to the November meeting.

**ACTION:** Amy informed the committee that to assist in the effort of listing the PEG channel line up the Cable Office will be posting channel information along with corresponding links to the county website. Suzanne told the committee that is one of many CCAC accomplishments and asked each committee member to help put together a list of the committee's accomplishments and goals for the upcoming year.

The committee has completed the letter addressing their bundling of E911 concerns. This letter will be sent to Amy Wilson to be forwarded to the providers, to the Council and Executive, and to Steven Emanuel to be included as part of the strategic study.

Suzanne told the committee of the four vacancies, nine applicants and the two reappointments, and that interviews were underway.

Suzanne shared with the committee that Councilmember Valerie Ervin is holding community meetings, and would like to include some education about the digital tv transition. She also asked the committee if there was any interest in attending just to hear some of the residents concerns. **RESPONSE:** Ben suggested that Senator Cardin is still interested in educating Montgomery County residents on the dtv transition.

Suzanne asked Amy if the Cable Office has put together a contingency plan to handle the volume of calls expected on February 17 due to the digital transition. **RESPONSE:** Amy responded that a plan is currently being put together.

### 4. New Business

Suzanne brought to the attention of the committee the upcoming annual County Executive presentation which may be held in January 2009; it is time for a new approach. She also reminded the Committee that support will be needed for the upcoming operating budget proposals to the County Executive and the County Council. She asked each committee member to come up with one goal and one accomplishment. Amy suggested that the committee start preparations early. Trish added the committee's presence at last years presentation made a great impact. Ben suggested reaching out to the Cable Compliance Commission prior to the actual date of the presentation to coordinate the efforts of both committees.

### 5. Public Comments

None

### 6. Adjourn

Meeting adjourned at 8:40pm. Next committee meeting scheduled for Thursday, November 20<sup>th</sup> 7pm